

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 – 29. (Cancelled).

30. (Currently amended) A method of distributing digital data content, ~~to a viewer~~ comprising:

blanket transmitting the digital data content to the a plurality of viewers in a proprietary encoded format, wherein said proprietary encoded format prevents display of said content absent at least one decoding key;

providing said at least one decoding key to a first viewer;

providing a mechanism for the first viewer to preselect desired digital data content for separate local storage, in a first user station associated with said first viewer, in said encoded format from the digital data content received by the viewer; and

receiving at a location remote from the first viewer digital data content displaying information from the first user station viewer to verify indicating that preselected digital data content has been retrieved from storage, decoded and displayed from the separate storage.

31. (Currently amended) The method of claim 30, further comprising:

blanket transmitting additional information to the plurality of viewers along with the digital data content, wherein the additional data is comprises a digital data content listing; and

providing a mechanism for the first viewer to preselect for local storage and possible future playback desired content represented by said content listing display any of the selected digital data content from storage that was previously selected.

32. (Previously presented)) The method of claim 31, further comprising periodically updating the additional data.

33. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising wherein the providing the mechanism for the viewer to select desired digital data content from the digital data content received comprises providing a mechanism for displaying, at the first user station, the digital data content listing information by category.

34 – 35. (Cancelled).

36. (Currently amended) The method of claim 34 31, further comprising enabling a ~~display device~~ said first user station for displaying of the selected and stored digital data content.

37. (Currently amended) The method of claim 36, wherein the enabling comprises transmitting an enabling signal to the ~~display device~~ first user station from the remote location.

38. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising altering the preselected and stored digital data content at the first user station to include information identifying the first user station, thereby rendering the stored content traceable to the first user station ~~wherein the digital data content is transmitted to a plurality of viewers, the method further comprising altering the selected and stored digital data content to identify the particular viewer from the plurality of viewers.~~

39. (Previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the altering comprises inserting a digital watermark in the selected digital data content prior to storage.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the additional information is comprises promotional information on relating to the digital data content.

42. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the digital data content is comprises video image data and the additional information is comprises a soundtrack corresponding to the video image data.

43. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising automatically preselecting desired digital data content from the plurality of digital data content for storage at the first user station ~~received by the viewer~~ according to predetermined criteria that is according to ~~a viewer~~ preference information provided by a user at the first user station.

44. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising automatically preselecting desired digital data content from the plurality of digital data content for storage at the first user station ~~received by the viewer~~ according to predetermined criteria that is according to ~~a viewer~~ profile information stored in the first user station.

45. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, further comprising advising the first viewer of the storage of the additional information.

46. (Cancelled).

47. (Currently amended) The method of claim 46 30, further comprising informing the first viewer of detected data errors in the stored digital data content and providing a mechanism for the ~~viewer~~ first user station to either display the digital data content with errors or repair the errors in the digital data content.

48. (Previously presented)) The method of claim 47, wherein the repair of the errors in the digital data content comprises retransmitting the digital data content and storing the retransmitted digital data content.

49. (Currently amended) The method of claim 46 47, further comprising designating a degree of errors in the stored digital data content and informing the viewer of the degree of errors.

50. (Previously presented)) The method of claim 30, further comprising crediting a provider of the digital data content upon displaying of the digital data content.

51-56. (Cancelled)

57. (Currently amended) A method of distributing digital data content to a authorized viewers, the method comprising:

blanket transmitting the digital data content ~~to the viewer~~;

at a first user station of a first viewer, automatically selecting desired digital data content from the blanket transmitted digital data content ~~received by the viewer~~ according to a ~~predetermined criteria, wherein the~~ predetermined criteria is based on the popularity of the digital data content;

and receiving ~~digital data content displaying~~ information from the ~~viewer~~ first user station at a remote location ~~to verify that~~ indicating that a selected digital data content item has been displayed.

58-59. (Cancelled)

60. (Currently amended) The method of claim 57, further comprising:
blanket transmitting classification information in a header of at least some of the digital data content;
at the first user station, comparing the classification information to preference information ~~of the~~ associated with the first viewer; and
at the first user station, automatically selecting digital data content from the digital data content having a predetermined degree of similarity between the classification information and the preference information.

61. (Previously presented)) The method of claim 57, further comprising overwriting stored digital data content with the automatically selected digital data content according to a predetermined criteria.

62. (Previously presented)) The method of claim 57, wherein the predetermined criteria is that oldest stored digital data content is overwritten with the automatically selected digital data content.

63. Previously presented)) The method of claim 57, wherein the predetermined criteria is that older releases of stored digital data content is overwritten with the automatically selected digital data content.

64. (Currently amended) The method of claim 57, wherein the predetermined criteria is that stored digital data content which least fits a preference of the first viewer is overwritten with the automatically selected digital data content.

65-113. (Cancelled)

114. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the additional data is further comprises a digital data content transmission schedule.

115. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the additional data is further comprises pricing data for displaying the digital data content.

116. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the additional data ~~is~~ further comprises a link to digital data content summary.

117. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the additional data ~~is~~ further comprises a link to critical review of the digital data content.

118. (Currently amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the additional data ~~is~~ further comprises a link to a sample of the digital data content.

119–120. (Cancelled).

121. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content, comprising:
a plurality of user stations configured for receiving, storing, decoding and playing content items encoded in a proprietary format, wherein said user stations provide a mechanism for users to preselect specific items and categories of items to be automatically stored in said proprietary format for later playback; and

a central control system configured for: (a) effecting the blanket transmission of content items in said proprietary format to said user stations; (b) communicating with said user stations to determine, for each user station, which content items have been played by said user station for viewing by a user associated with said user station; and (c) billing the users for those content items that have been played.

122. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, and further comprising a data transmission system operatively coupled to said central control system for blanket transmitting content items in said proprietary format.

123. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 122, wherein said data transmission system comprises a satellite transmission system.

124. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said central control system is configured to communicate on a periodic basis with user stations via a telecommunications system to determine played content.

125. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said proprietary format comprises security codes interlaced into frames of the content items in combination with at least one time-based code key, wherein a given content item is unviewable by standard DVD players as well as a user station that does not possess a copy of said at least one time-based code key.

126. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 125, wherein said at least one time-based code key is blanket transmitted along with each content item and has a value which is changed periodically such that all content items transmitted within a given period are associated with a common time-based code key.

127. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 126, wherein the system is further configured to blanket transmit periodically a second time-based code key whose value which is changed periodically, wherein each user station is configured to play a given content item only when both said at least one time-based code key and said second time-based code key are present.

128. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 127, wherein the system is further configured to transmit periodically a third time-based code key to only those user stations whose billing account is current, wherein each user station is configured to play a given content item only when said at least one time-based code key, said second time-based code key, and said third time-based code keys are present.

129. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 128, wherein said at least one time-based code key and said second time-based code key are blanket transmitted to said plurality of user stations, and said third time-based code key is transmitted monthly to only those user stations whose account is current.

130. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 125, wherein said security codes are interlaced through every third frame of each content item.

131. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 125, wherein said security codes and said time-based code keys are related in a specified location over multiple frames of each content item.

132. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, further comprising a mechanism in each user station for altering the preselected and stored content items to include information identifying the user station.

133. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 132, wherein said mechanism for altering comprises a mechanism for watermarking content items, thereby rendering each stored and played item traceable to a user.

134. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said central control system is further configured to update pricing information for content items and to communicate updated pricing information to said user stations.

135. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein the user stations are configured to store user profile information.

136. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said central station is further configured to blanket transmit content preview information to said plurality of user stations, and wherein each user station is configured to select which preview information to store based on user profile information stored in that user station.

137. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 136, wherein said content preview information comprises at least one move clip.

138. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 136, wherein said content preview information comprises content summary information.

139. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said central control system is further configured to blanket transmit selected categories of content items at prescribed off-peak times.

140. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said central control system is further configured to blanket transmit to said plurality of user stations information about available content items and pricing.

141. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said content items are blanket transmitted with header information, and wherein said user stations are configured to use said header information in selecting which content items are to be recorded.

142. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said central control system is further configured to blanket transmit content items transmitted in a compressed time format.

143. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein at least one of said user stations includes a mechanism to write movies to a non-proprietary DVD format including a watermark indicative of the identity of said at least one user station.

144. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein said central control system is further configured to cause at least one user station to automatically record selected content items.

145. (New) A system for distributing video and audio content as recited in claim 121, wherein at least one user station is configured to store and display advertising based on user profile information stored in said at least one user station.